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CIS-4-5000

WASHINGTON SPECIAL ACTIONS GROUP MEETING

April 24, 1974

Time and Place: 3:13 p.m. - 3:51 p.m., White House Situation RoomSubject: EthiopiaParticipants:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Henry A. Kissinger	<u>JCS:</u>	Vice Adm. John P. Weinel
<u>State:</u>	Kenneth Rush Donald Easum Robert Keeley Brandon Grove	<u>CIA:</u>	William Colby Lawrence Devlin
<u>Defense:</u>	Amos Jordan James H. Noyes George Bader	<u>NSC:</u>	Major Gen. Brent Scowcroft Harold Horan Lt. Col. Donald Stukel James Barnum

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

Defense, in collaboration with the Department of State, would prepare a paper, by close of business April 25, 1974, addressing the following:

--What can we do to expedite present programs of military, economic, and drought assistance to Ethiopia;

--What additional assistance can we give over and above FY 1974 and FY 1975 programs;

--What items of military hardware we would be able and willing to sell to Ethiopia for cash.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE (XGDS)~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

Secretary Kissinger: Since I couldn't make any sense out of Ethiopia at the Department (State) meeting, I thought we would have an interagency meeting here. Maybe it will be a little clearer. Bill....

Mr. Colby: Briefed from the attached text.

Secretary Kissinger: Is that to anybody? Do you mean the existing government or the military? (In reference to a statement in the final paragraph of the attached briefing that the Chinese have hinted that they are willing to provide the reformers significant new assistance).

Mr. Colby: Yes, the existing (Endalkatchew) government. The Chinese, as you know, have made an offer to organize, train, and arm a militia. They (the Chinese) have also given the Ethiopians some training in the past.

Mr. Rush: Yes, Bill, but that was quite a while back. They would have to start all over again if they were going to give them military training. That was some time ago. They would have to start all over again, from scratch.

Mr. Colby: Sure they would.

Secretary Kissinger: Would anybody else like to express a view? Don (Mr. Easum)?

Mr. Easum: We don't have anything to add. We pretty much agree--don't have any differences with the Intelligence Estimate. (Mr. Colby's briefing).

Secretary Kissinger: Didn't I see somewhere that our withdrawal from Kagnev exacerbated things.

Mr. Colby: It hasn't, at least to any significant degree as far as we can tell.

Mr. Rush: Actually, Haile Selassie submitted that list for military equipment last year, when they really feared an attack by Somalia. The present unrest is another matter. They (the Ethiopians) think Somalia is going to attack them, but we have no evidence of this. There's no troop movements or signs of hostilities, right?

Mr. Colby: Right! As we see it, there are three problems: the Ogaden, Eritrea, and the situation in Addis itself.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

Mr. Jordan: Of course, we do have the option of turning loose some of that equipment that they have been asking for.

Secretary Kissinger: It seems to me that we have to ask ourselves whether, over the long term, Ethiopia's orientation is our problem. Do we try to influence events there or not?

Mr. Colby: What if the government turns out to be a success? If we did nothing--remained passive--and the government survived, we would be discredited.

Secretary Kissinger: Exactly! That's the question. What is in our interest, to support the present government--or the military?

Mr. Easum: But the problem is more difficult than that. We can't identify who actually is in power. There is such a complex of military factions we don't know who is really running the show.

Secretary Kissinger: Didn't I read, wasn't it in an INR report that the withdrawal from Kagnew was interpreted as a lessening of U.S. interest in Ethiopia and thus triggered the present situation? Did you see that? (to General Scowcroft).

Mr. Colby: That seems a bit far out to me.

Mr. Rush: I told Haile Selassie about our intentions to withdraw from Kagnew before we announced it last year. He didn't seem concerned about it.

Secretary Kissinger: We interpret acquiescence on the part of a government to mean that they really agreed to it. I've seen this happen time and time again. What it really means is that we are showing a lack of confidence in the affected government. I've never seen a withdrawal package go through here--and there have been many--that a government has rejected. Nobody has ever rejected one, but nevertheless we do pay a price in confidence.

Mr. Colby: Well, the present situation is due to the failure of the Emperor. It's been going on a long time. Under such circumstances, something has to change. It's just natural.

Mr. Jordan: There was an effort in 1966 by the military to unseat Haile Selassie, but the present situation is really due to long-term economic and social deterioration. The military and the students have been restless for a long time. Kagnew may not have instigated the revolt, but may have been the straw that broke the camel's back.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

4

Mr. Easum: The military's prime concern is economic and social progress and equal distribution of land. There's no evidence yet that Kagnew had a bearing on the revolt. There were other, more overwhelming factors.

Mr. Rysh: We could expedite their request for \$125 million in military equipment. This would placate the government and show the military we support it rather than the Somalis.

Secretary Kissinger: What would we accomplish by that?

Mr. Colby: Well, one thing is that the other countries in Africa are watching to see what we do. We've been identified with Haile Selassie for so long. Mobutu, Kenyatta, and others are keeping an eye on our reaction to what is going on. The Kenyans are quite concerned about the situation, and can't believe we would walk away from this thing.

Secretary Kissinger: My experience is that Haile Selassie does nothing unless it is that he makes the most boring toasts of anybody I have ever heard.

Mr. Jordan: We have an added interest in helping the new government, if feasible. This transition period is going to be difficult. It would be in our interest to see that the transition brings to power groups not identified with the military radicals. This gives us the opportunity to influence the people who will be calling the shots.

Mr. Easum: Has any faction called for assistance? None that I know of. I think--as far as I know--that is a rather low-level delegation that is coming for the aid.

Secretary Kissinger: What do you mean watching us carefully? (to Mr. Colby)?

Mr. Colby: To see if we are reacting sensibly, rationally.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, what do you think we ought to do?

Mr. Colby: I'm not supposed to say. That's out of my area.

Secretary Kissinger: Oh, you can't say here, but you could tell me upstairs.

Mr. Easum: My inclination is not to act hastily, but to hold back until we get a clearer picture of the situation. We can maintain our \$17 million MAP program at the present level and turn on more drought assistance, which is available. There are a few other sympathetic gestures we could make that would be a signal to the Somalis that we are not unsympathetic to the new government. Sidewinders are another item. They have asked for them.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

~~TOP SECRET/SECRET~~

Mr. Bader: Yes, but that stuff is not funded as yet.

Secretary Kissinger: What do you mean?

Mr. Jordan: We could give them the \$8 million in grant aid. The paper-work on that is already completed. The other \$3 million is a question since we have to see first what our other commitments are world-wide.

Mr. Easum: You mean we may not even be able to give them what we have already told them we would?

Mr. Jordan: On the \$2 million we may.

Mr. Rush: But there is a \$40 million ceiling on FMS for all of Africa. We don't know yet how it is going to break down.

Mr. Jordan: We still have \$6 million left.

Mr. Easum: We have to determine how this all relates to the \$138 million request. They have asked for T-48 tanks, air to surface missiles, other things like that.

Secretary Kissinger: Let's get to the basic problem. Do we want to remain passive and just accept the new government that emerges, or do we want to shape it? Do we want to be an active force in the situation?

Mr. Colby: Which situation? Addis or Ogaden?

Secretary Kissinger: I would assume we would get into the Addis problem before the Ogaden one. We get into Addis simply by doing what they have asked for.

Mr. Colby: But do we deal with the military or with the civilian government? The question is what kind of relationship we want with the government. Do we send an Ambassador there with instructions to cozy up to the government? We don't even have an ambassador there.

Secretary Kissinger: We need an ambassador? Everybody wants to be an ambassador.

Mr. Colby: We haven't had one for several months.

Secretary Kissinger: I didn't know that. We'll send one

~~TOP SECRET/SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

6

Mr. Rush: We have four assistant secretaries who all want to be ambassadors.

Mr. Colby: That's not bad, four out of eight.

Mr. Jordan: In our view, it would be a no-cost situation for us to give further support. We could proceed with the grant military assistance, and get good concessionary terms on the credit. These excess items, like the 105 howitzers and such, are small items of moderate cost. It would demonstrate our support. The military is going to play an important part in the succession, and giving them some of the aid they have requested would demonstrate our interest in them.

Secretary Kissinger: What could we give them for \$135 million?

Mr. Rush: Oh, lots of things. The amount is inconsequential. They are convinced an attack is imminent. The issue is whether we are willing to sell the equipment for cash.

Mr. Jordan: Sidewinders would be included in there.

Secretary Kissinger: I approved the Sidewinders six months ago. I'm glad State has finally come around to my view.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Clements feels--after talking with them--that the Saudis are prepared to fund upwards of twenty-five, thirty, even forty million dollars worth of arms for Ethiopia.

Mr. Easum: We proposed this, and they said it wouldn't be quick enough. The question is our image. If we don't agree to their request it's a sign that we are anti this government. They're going to go somewhere for the arms.

Secretary Kissinger: Our first problem is, are we just going to sit and let the situation evolve on its own course, or are we going to get actively involved and try to steer the course of events? They will be watching what we are doing and taking their cue from that.

Mr. Easum: It's really a question of doing nothing or going beyond what we have already told them we would be willing to do.

Mr. Rush: We could allay their fears by doing a number of things. For example, an exchange of intelligence information. Secondly, assure them

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

~~TOP SECRET//SENSITIVE~~

that the Soviets are not behind the Somalis. You (Secretary Kissinger) could talk to Gromyko about this on your way to the Middle East.

Secretary Kissinger: Gromyko is not going to be in a very good mood after what we are going to tell him. I'm not so sure that would be at all productive. I don't want to draw his attention to that part of the world.

Adm. Weinert: Oh, I think we're pretty confident that the Soviets are not involved in all of this.

Mr. Rush: The request is only for defensive arms.

Secretary Kissinger: But those arms can't be delivered fast enough, right?

Mr. Rush: The Sidewinders could be.

Mr. Jordan: They've asked for a number of anti-tank weapons. Those could be delivered fast. The major items--like tanks--need a long lead time, however.

Mr. Rush: Well, we're not sure they could use tanks anyway, are we? We don't know if they can maintain them.

Mr. Jordan: If I could revert for a moment to the question of whether we should remain passive or take an active role. It is Defense's view that some effort ought to be made to get them some of this equipment they have asked for--at least that which they want quickly.

Secretary Kissinger: Could we see a paper on what type of effort you propose? By tomorrow night (April 25)?

Mr. Jordan: Sure.

Mr. Easum: [REDACTED]

Mr. Colby: [REDACTED]

Mr. Rush: [REDACTED]

Mr. Colby: Fine

Mr. Easum: I would like to probe some of the neighboring countries like Sudan, Somalia, and Kenya.

~~TOP SECRET//SENSITIVE~~

Secretary Kissinger: What for?

Mr. Easum: To get their estimate of the situation.

Secretary Kissinger: (to Mr. Jordan) Can we get that paper? It should answer two questions: (1) How can we expedite the present military and economic programs, and (2) What additional assistance can we give. Can we have that by tomorrow night? And list what can be expedited fast. When we find out what can be expedited, then we'll be in a position to consider what we can do for them.

Mr. Rush: I think that paper should also have what we are willing to sell them for cash.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, definitely. Can you get that to us by tomorrow night (April 25)?

Mr. Jordan: Yes.

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